

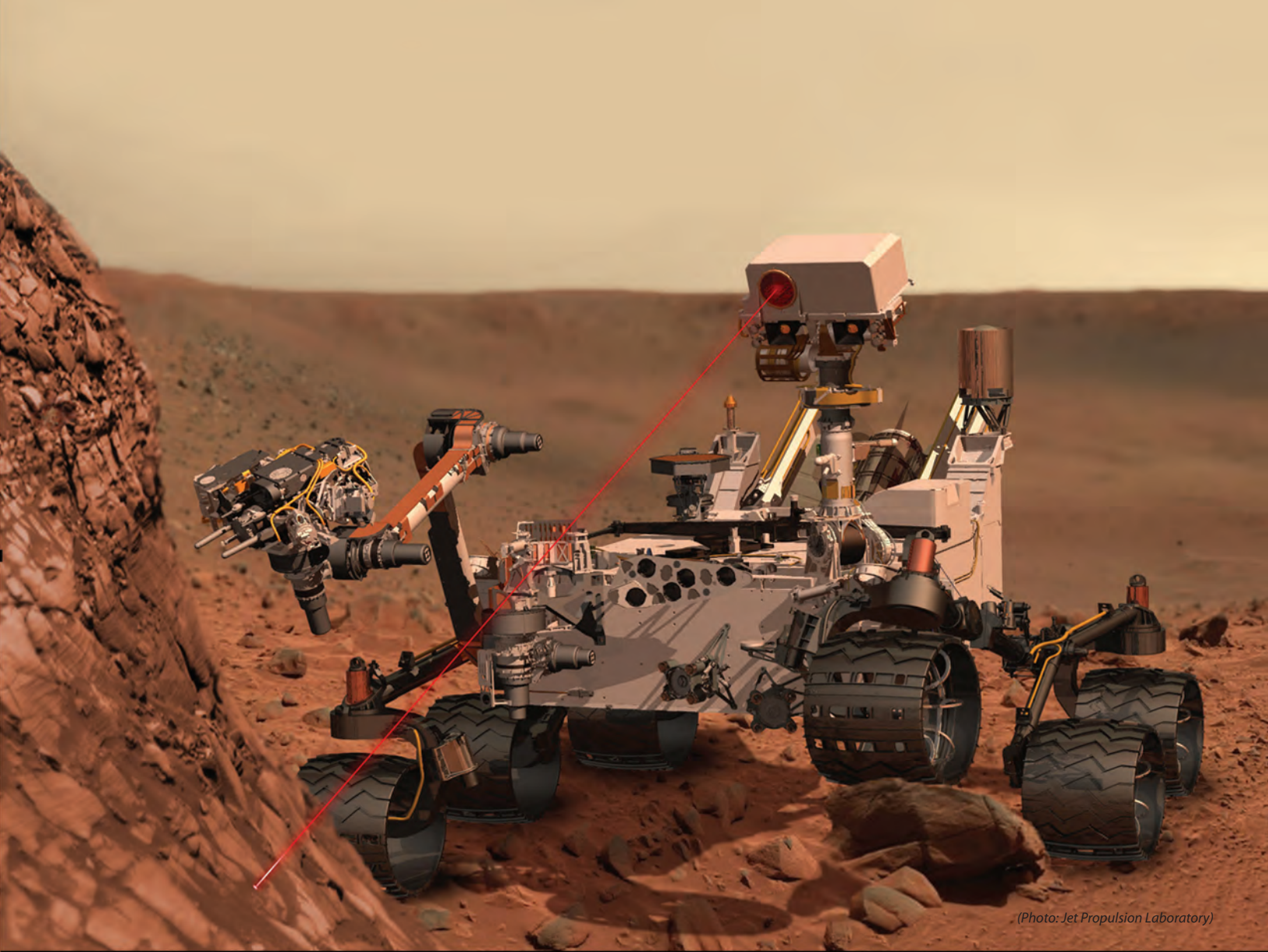
THEN &

*Los Alamos photographs celebrating the
Laboratory's past and present*

Following the world's first nuclear test, Trinity, in 1945, Los Alamos scientists used a Lab-customized Sherman tank to roam the test site and collect radioactive debris and soil samples for analysis.

To protect the scientists, the tank was outfitted with lead shielding and bottles of air for breathing. The scientists gathered samples through a trap door in the bottom of the tank.





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NASA's Mars rover Curiosity continues its 23-month mission, begun in August 2012, to gather evidence scientists will use to determine if Mars has or ever had an environment that could support microbial life. Roaming the planet surface, Curiosity analyzes the flashes of light produced as the laser it carries vaporizes bits of rock and soil on the planet's surface. It also collects physical samples for further analysis.

Curiosity's laser and its chemical- and mineral-analysis instruments are products of Los Alamos and its collaborators. In addition, Los Alamos developed the type of plutonium-powered battery that powers Curiosity. This type of long-lasting battery, which has been used by NASA for more than three decades to power space exploration, is a byproduct of the Laboratory's work in plutonium science. The National Nuclear Security Administration proclaims Los Alamos to be the "center of plutonium excellence for the nation."

From 1943 until the end of World War II (WWII) in 1945, Los Alamos was a secret city—officially it did not exist. Even after its existence became public in 1945, access to the town was controlled for security reasons until 1957. Everyone coming into or leaving the town had to show a government-issued pass and undergo careful scrutiny at its main entrance gate (shown here in 1951).



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WWII military-style vehicles were a common sight in Los Alamos for many years. Below, a WWII-era U.S. military-style truck drives through the muddy intersection of Central Avenue and 15th Street in Los Alamos in the winter of 1948. The main streets were not paved until the 1950s.



In 1957 Los Alamos became an open town—official passes were no longer required, and the entrance gates were removed. However, the guard station remained. It was remodeled and eventually became a popular restaurant at the edge of town. The guard station's chimney is still visible today, incorporated into the restaurant's kitchen.



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In the summer of 2013, a modern truck drives through the same intersection.





After WWII, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) was created to administer the nation's nuclear weapons complex. In Los Alamos this meant that in 1947 the AEC began to oversee the Laboratory and the community of Los Alamos, neither of which was open to the public. In the photograph above, taken in the late 1940s, armed AEC guards on horseback are shown patrolling the northern perimeter of the community (on Los Alamos Mesa overlooking Pueblo Canyon).

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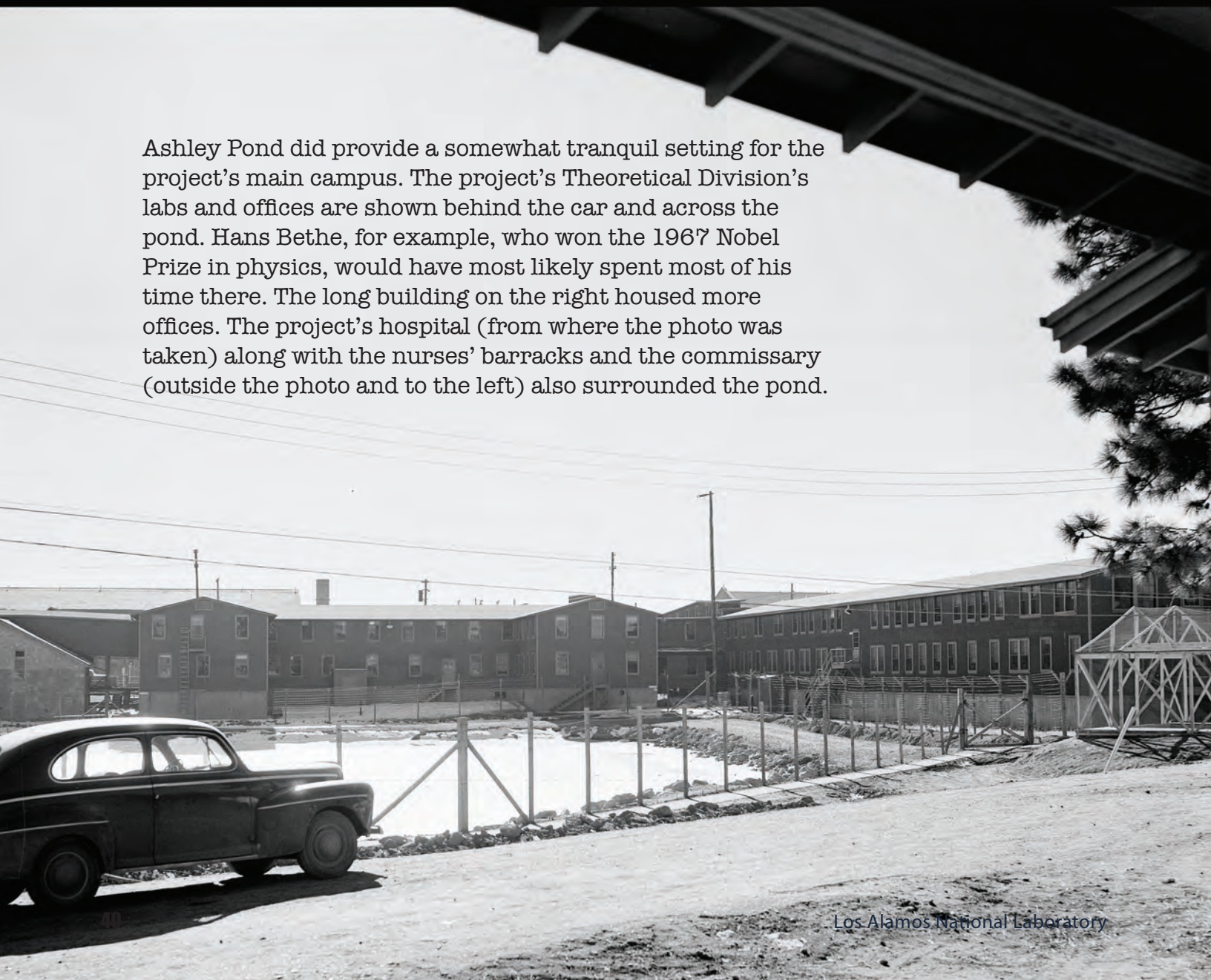
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Los Alamos remained a guarded, secured community until 1957. Many of the trails used by the AEC's horse-mounted patrols are today used for recreation.

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Ashley Pond, shown here in January 1947, was named after Ashley Pond, the founder of the secluded Los Alamos Boys Ranch School. The pond was part of the school's campus but had no buildings around it. The U.S. government bought the school to use its remote location for the Manhattan Project. It's a natural pond and it served no purpose in making the atomic bombs during the project.

Ashley Pond did provide a somewhat tranquil setting for the project's main campus. The project's Theoretical Division's labs and offices are shown behind the car and across the pond. Hans Bethe, for example, who won the 1967 Nobel Prize in physics, would have most likely spent most of his time there. The long building on the right housed more offices. The project's hospital (from where the photo was taken) along with the nurses' barracks and the commissary (outside the photo and to the left) also surrounded the pond.



All of the war-era buildings around the pond were removed when the Lab eventually moved to a more isolated location. By 1966, the government had given the pond and the property surrounding it to Los Alamos County.

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Ashley Pond, shown here in July 2014, is now the public center of the town of Los Alamos. Concerts, weddings and celebrations of all kinds, and the counties' various fairs regularly use the grounds around the pond. This photo was taken from approximately the same location as the 1947 photo.

